

Amendment to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended) A method of processing a call ~~made to a telephone number and~~ directed to a specific communications device that is connected to a telecommunications system ~~to which that telephone number is assigned~~, the method comprising:

informing the customers of the telecommunications system that one of a plurality of unique sets of prefix characteristics is normally, but not always, associated with one type of communications device that is connectable to a telecommunications system;

assigning one of a plurality of unique multi-digit telephone numbers to each selected customer of the telecommunications system within each area code of each local area and granting said each selected customer having a specific communications device that is connected to the telecommunications system the exclusive right to optionally use a combination comprising any one of said unique sets of prefix characteristics plus said unique multi-digit telephone number to identify the specific communications device other than a land voice line to the other customers of the telecommunications system;

receiving a sequence of signals representing a specific set of prefix characteristics ~~immediately preceding~~ plus a specific unique multi-digit telephone number that has been dialed by a caller, the combination of the specific set of prefix characteristics ~~being distinguishable from plus said~~ specific multi-digit telephone number ~~and defining a~~ identifying the specific

communications device that is the destination for said call, each telephone having at least one destination;

assigning a directory number for the destination, the directory number being the prefix for the destination plus the telephone number; and

forwarding connecting said call to the specific communications device that is the destination for said call without necessarily determining the type of communications device to which the call is directed; defined by the set of prefix characteristics

thereby providing about 7.92 million assignable combinations for landline voice communication devices within each area code, about 7.92 million assignable combinations for facsimile or second land line voice communications devices within each area code, and about 7.92 million assignable combinations for cellular telephone communication devices within each area code;

thereby at least about tripling the number of assignable combinations within each area code when compared to the number of assignable numbers available within an area code of a conventional telecommunications system;

thereby allowing at least about sixty-six percent fewer area codes to be used to serve local areas when compared to a conventional telecommunications system; and

thereby substantially eliminating the practice of requiring customers to dial ten digits to reach a communications device within a specific local area.

Claim 2 (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the specific further comprising representing a destination with a set of prefix characteristics is the # symbol and the # symbol

plus said specific multi-digit telephone number identifies a specific fax machine or a specific second voice line with or without an associated facsimile machine.

Claim 3 (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the specific further comprising directing a call to a destination by dialing a set of prefix characteristics representing the destination and a telephone number having the same destination assigned to the telephone number is the * symbol and * symbol plus said specific multi-digit telephone number identifies a first specific cellular telephone.

Claim 4 (currently amended) The method of claim 3, wherein the specific set of prefix characteristics corresponds to a destination for a call made to a telephone number, the destination being a specific communications device is a digit plus the * symbol and the * symbol plus said specific multi-digit telephone number identifies another specific cellular telephone.

Claims 5-9 (cancelled)

Claim 10 (currently amended) A method of directing a call to a specific communications device, comprising:

announcing to the customers of a telecommunications system that one of a plurality of unique symbols is normally associated with a particular type of communications device that is connectable to a telecommunications system;

assigning one of a plurality of unique telephone numbers to each selected customer of the telecommunications system and granting said each selected customer having a specific

communications device the exclusive right to optionally use a combination comprising any one of said unique symbols plus said unique telephone number to identify the specific communications device to other customers of the telecommunications system;

~~allocating a plurality of sets of prefix characteristics to the plurality of communications devices, each communications device being a destination for a call and having one set of prefix characteristics; and~~

receiving a call having been initiated by a caller by dialing a combination comprising a set of prefix characteristics specific unique symbol and a specific telephone number, the set of prefixes and telephone number forming a directory number;

determining the destination indicated by the set of prefix characteristics combination without determining the type of communications device to which the call is directed; and

routing the call to the specific communications device represented by the set of prefix characteristics combination.

Claims 11 (currently amended) The method of claim 10, wherein the specific unique symbol further comprising directing a call to a destination by dialing a set of prefix characteristics representing a destination and a telephone number having the same destination assigned to the telephone number is the pound key and the pound key plus said specific telephone number identifies a specific fax machine or a specific second voice line with or without an associated fax machine.

Claim 12 (currently amended) The method of claim 10, wherein the specific unique symbol further comprising assigning at least one additional destination to a telephone number, the set of

~~prefix characteristics and the telephone number combining to represent a destination for a particular call~~ is the star key and star key plus said specific telephone number identifies a first specific cellular telephone.

Claim 13 (currently amended) The method of claim 10, wherein the specific unique symbol further comprising determining if a call is made from a cellular or a land-based telephone is a digit plus the star key and star key plus said specific telephone number identifies another specific cellular telephone.

Claim 14 (currently amended) The method of claim 10, further comprising directing the call to a cellular processing network if the ~~set of prefix characteristics~~ specific unique symbol and the specific telephone number indicates that the call is being made to a specific cellular telephone.

Claim 15 (currently amended) A system for processing a call made to a telephone number and directed to a specific communications device to which that telephone number is assigned, the system comprising:

means for announcing to the customers of a telecommunications system that one of a plurality of suggested sets of prefix characteristics is normally associated with a single type of communications device that is connectable to a telecommunications system;

means for assigning one of a plurality of common telephone numbers to each selected customer of the telecommunications system and granting said each selected customer having a specific communications device the exclusive right to optionally use a combination comprising any one of said suggested sets of prefix characteristics plus said common telephone number to

identify the specific communications device to other customers of the telecommunications system;

a sequence of signals representing a specific set of prefix characteristics and a specific common telephone number that have been dialed by a caller, the sequence of signals being a directory number for the specific communications device, the set of prefix characteristics immediately preceding the common telephone number, ~~and~~ being distinguishable from said common telephone number and together with said common telephone number defining a destination for said call, each common telephone number having at least one destination; and

a routing apparatus having a switching component and an identification component for determining the intended destination of a the call without determining the type of communications device to which the call is directed and ~~forwarding~~ connecting the call to that destination.

Claims 16-23 (cancelled)

Claim 24 (amended currently) A routing system for directing calls to different communications devices having identical telephone numbers, said system comprising:

an administrative subsystem comprising means for informing the customers of a telecommunications system that one of a plurality of suggested symbols is normally associated with each type of communications device that is connectable to a telecommunications system and means for assigning one of a plurality of unique telephone numbers to each selected customer of the telecommunications system and granting said each selected customer having a specific communications device the exclusive right to optionally use a combination comprising

any one of said plurality of suggested symbols plus said unique telephone number to identify the specific communications device to other customers of the telecommunications system;

a network subsystem having routing apparatus including a switching component and an identification component for processing a call to a destination, the call including a sequence of signals indicating a set of prefix characteristics and a telephone number that have been dialed by a caller, the destination being identified by the set of prefix characteristics, the sequence of signals being a directory number for the specific communications device; and

at least one communications device assigned to a telephone number;

wherein said the set of prefix characters does not indicate to said routing apparatus that the specific communications device is a particular type of communications device.

Claims 25-34 (cancelled)

Claim 35 (new) In a telecommunications system in which at least some subscribers control a plurality of communications devices, a system for routing a telephone call to a specific communications device of a particular subscriber, said system comprising:

means for accepting a combination comprising a code and a common telephone number as an indication that a caller desires to reach the specific communications device of the particular subscriber, said specific communications device of the particular subscriber being reachable by the caller's dialing no other telephone number; and

means for routing said telephone call to the specific communications device of the particular subscriber;

wherein said code does not indicate to said means for routing that the specific communications device of the particular subscriber is a particular type of communications device.

Claim 36 (new) The system of claim 35 wherein the means for accepting is selected from the group consisting of:

- a line telephone,
- a cellular or wireless telephone,
- a facsimile machine, and
- a pager.

Claim 37 (new) The system of claim 35 wherein said code is selected from the group consisting of:

- a prefix that precedes an area code,
- a prefix that follows an area code,
- a suffix that precedes an area code, and
- a suffix that follows an area code.

Claim 38 (new) The system of claim 35, wherein said code is the # symbol and the # symbol plus said common telephone number identifies a specific fax machine or a specific second voice line with or without an associated facsimile machine.

Claim 39 (new) The system of claim 35, wherein said code is the * symbol and * symbol plus said common telephone number identifies a first specific cellular telephone.

Claim 40 (new) The system of claim 35, wherein said code is a digit plus the * symbol and the digit plus the * symbol plus said common telephone number identifies another specific cellular telephone.

Claim 41 (new) The system of claim 35, wherein said code is a digit plus the # symbol and the digit plus the # symbol plus said common telephone number identifies another specific voice land line with or without an associated facsimile machine.